

Sinclair Broadcast Group of Maryland, owner of the largest chain of television stations in the nation, plans to preempt regular programming two weeks before the Nov. 2 election to air a documentary that accuses Sen. John F. Kerry of betraying American prisoners during the Vietnam War.

Sinclair Broadcasting has chosen to air a very one-sided piece ("Stolen Honor: Wounds That Never Heal") against one of the 2 major candidates for President in the 2 weeks before the election. They have suggested that it is "news", when it is clearly, at best, an Op Ed piece. At *very* least, if they are going to air a piece that is this one-sided, they should be airing *either* an opposing piece (such as "Going Upriver") or a piece that is as disparaging of President Bush as "Stolen Honor" is of Senator Kerry.

This unprecedented move would be direct electioneering by a corporate media giant -- and against federal election law. This will hit 24% of the stations in the U.S. If this isn't an example of Corporate Media Control gone Haywire, I don't know what is...

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.